

THE
STATE
OF THE
Church of Christ,
IN ITS
MILITANCY upon EARTH,
And the DUTY of it, with respect to
Penal LAWS,
IN A
SERMON

Preach'd at the Assizes at *Chelmsford*
In the County of *ESSEX*,
8 MARCH 1687.

By *RICHARD GOLTY* M. A.
Minister of *Hutton* in the County aforesaid.

Quod tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris.

LONDON, Printed and Published by *Randall Tayler* near
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This may be Printed.

SUNDERLAND. P.

SERMON

Preached at the Altar of the Church of St. Andrew
in the County of Durham
on the 11th of June 1781

By **RICHARD GOLT M. A.**
Rector of the Church of St. Andrew

LONDON: Printed and Published by J. DODD, at the
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To the Right Honourable Sir Robert
Wright Knight, Lord Chief Justice of England,
to the Honourable Sir John Powel Knight, one
of the Justices of His Majesties Court of Kings-
Bench; My Lords, the Judges at the Assize
holden at Chelmsford, &c. And also to the
Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Manby Knight,
High Sheriff of the County aforesaid.

THis Sermon, at the Appointment of the High
Sheriff, was Preach'd before Your Lord-
ships and the Great Assembly at the Assizes; and
what ever unkind and sinistrous Censures in this nice
and critical Age, may be cast upon me and it, yet it
was honestly design'd by me, in Service to the Peace
and Unity of the Christian Church, to affect that
Auditory with a sense of their Obligation constantly
to assert what is necessary to the support and honour
of Religion among us, and to allay our salt and eager
Differences and Animosities, in what is impertinent
thereunto; to dispose us to a willingness to be rid of
those Apples of Srise, that have been the notorious
occasion of Discord and Contention in this unhappily
divided Kingdom. I can't but hope that there is such
a general sense of our having been too long under those
symptomes of Gods displeasure, which the Prophet Isai-
ah 9. 21. observes, concerning the Jews (that while

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Ephraim was divided against Manassch, and Manassch against Ephraim, and both against Judah, Gods Anger was not turned away, but his hand was stretched out still against them) as may prepare our hearts to a chearful concurrence in, and compliance with such healing Proposals, as are proper for the establishing amongst us a Christian Amity and brotherly Reconciliation. I have humble Confidence that this, which was my end in Preaching, is Your Lordships and Worships, in laying me under such Obligation to the Publication of it, as I cannot in decency decline; not doubting but that all such as bear Good Will to Zion, will promote such uniting Methods, that all single and narrow Interests, may give place to that of common Christianity; that no unchristian heats and contests, may cause such alienation in affection among Brethren of the same Sacred Family, as for trifles to fall out in their way to their Fathers House; but that we may all consent in the pursuit of the Divine Ends of Religion, which are sincere Devotion towards God, sound Faith in Christ, Holiness in Heart and Life, Humility, Meekness, Brother-Love and Charity towards Men; in service to which, that Your Honours and Worship may be eminent in your respective Stations Instrumentally, is the most hearty Prayer of

Your most Obedient
and Humble Servant

RIC. GOLTT

S. Matthew Chap. XIII. the 29th and the former part of the 30th. Verse.

But he said, Nay: lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them; Let both grow up together until the Harvest.

THe shortest Preface will be an unseasonable Remora to my Entry into that Spacious Field in which my Text engages my travel; it being by the most Divine Expositor, with respect to its Extent, styl'd the World.

I shall therefore observe to you, That in this whole Parable of the Tares and Wheat, our Blessed Saviour doth first describe the State, and secondly prescribe the Duty of his Church in its Militancy here upon Earth.

In the first of which 'tis evident, that tho Christ himself is the Seedsman, tho he sows only the good seed of Pure and Divine Doctrine, yet when the blade

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blade springs up, the tares also appear: Tho the Church is styl'd here the Kingdom of God, in which he in especial governs, yet there are in it too many rebellious and undutiful *Subjects*: Tho the Apostle tells us, 'Tis the House of God, in which by his *grace* and *spirit*, he particularly resides, yet 'tis not void of *ungracious* and *disobedient servants*. 'Tis *Magna Domus Dei*, but in it there are not only *Vessels of Gold and Silver*, but of *Wood and Earth*; some to honour and some to dishonour. Tho 'tis that *Vine* which Gods right hand hath planted, yet it hath some *dead* and *infertile branches*. That this is the condition of the *Christian Church* in this *World*, is not only the purport of this but of the *Parable of the Fold*, consisting both of *Sheep and Goats*, of the *Barn floor*, having both *Wheat* and *Chaffe*, and of the *Net* inclosing *Fishes* good and bad.

To this purpose *St. Austine* in his *First Book De Civitate Dei*, saith, *Perplexæ sunt istæ duæ Civitates in hoc seculo inquitæque permixtæ*; The *City of God* and the *City of Satan*, are so intermix'd in this *World*, that they are not to be separated till the *Day of Judgment*.

This from all that make common *Observation*, commands such an *universal acknowledgment*, that I shall not waste the time in offering further enlargement upon it; only from it observe the *Unaccountableness*

accountableness of the Separation in the Donatists of old, and some others of late, from the Visible Church, upon pretence of Spots and Corruptions in it; notwithstanding which we are to be firm to that Article in our Creed, in believing One Holy Catholick Church: Denominatio sit a nobilitate, and is one, the one part Militant here on Earth, and the other Triumphant in Heaven.

It must be here in a state of Imperfection, as at the great Harvest, then, and not till then, it will be Perfect, consisting only of the Righteous, as St. Augustine, *Contra Donatistas. Tandem ipsam unam & sanctam Ecclesiam, nunc habere mixtos malos, tunc non habituram*: Now the Holy Church hath a mixture of unholy Men in it; which then it will not have. At that great Day Christ will present it to himself without spot, and blemish. Then, only the Wheat will be gathered into his Barn.

But as the Direction Christ gives in this place [that being the most seasonable and useful at this time] to which I shall now confine my Discourse. When the Blade sprung up, the Tares also appeared, the Servants inquiring in this uncasie, and to them unexpected Case, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* In answer to this their demand, he said, *Nay, &c.*

Where first he enters his Denial.

2. He gives his positive Sentence, *Let them grow up together.*

The Reason of the Negative, *Left while ye gather up the Tares, &c.*

And of the Positive, why suffer'd in their growth? Because at the time of the *Harvest* they could more seasonably, and with greater safety, be separated from the *Wheat*. Then I will say to the *Reapers*, &c.

In my procedure upon this, I shall endeavour first to shew you what is meant by *Tares*:

2. What *Christ* intends in this his Answer:

And 3. To accommodate the whole of it to our Use.

First, *zizania* which is the greek word, is mention'd only in this place in the New Testament, and it is rarely to be found in other Authors, that its obscurity gives the occasion of variety in Translations of it; the *French* render it *Lolium darnel*, and *Theophrast.* saith, *That Corn doth sometime Loliescere, degenerate into Darnel.*

Diодore thinks it some particular Weed growing amongst Corn in that Countrey. *Dr. Hammond* translates it *Cockle*. Others give a more general Interpretation of it, as *Mala Herba & planta semini noxia*; we translate it *Tares*.

By

By which may be understood *Tyne*, or a sort of *Wild Fitches*, which hath small *fibrous Roots*, and in twisting about the *Roots* of the *Corn*, sucks away its *Nourishment*, and hath clasps in the *Branches*, that fastening upon the *Stalk*, depresses it, and without greatest hazard to it, cannot be separated from it.

Since in this Parable the Devil is the Sower of them, and the *Tares are Wicked Men*, in this Variety may be meant [as in our Marginal Notes] all noisome Weeds whatsoever that are noxious to the *Corn*, and particularly *Infelix Lolium Darnel*, which naturally disaffects the *Head*, and so may properly denote Men Erring in Judgment, or more rank and unsavoury Weeds, as *Carlock*, *Mayweed*, &c. which may properly describe Men Vicious in their Lives, such as walk disorderly; 'tis the unhappy Fate of the Church to be infested with them both. *Infelix Lolium & steriles dominantur Avena.*

But 2. What doth *Christ* mean in forbidding his Servants to gather these up, and in suffering their growth till the *Harvest*, which himself being the *Expositor*, is to the end of the World?

First, Negatively, *Christ* is not to be interpreted in this, as if he were at all pleas'd with the growth of these Weeds.

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It would undoubtedly be most grateful to him to have only such pure Grain in his Field, as is fit to be gathered into his Barn, *Beauxant in locum, Docetur hic non quale sit officium magistratuum, sed quale sit futura Ecclesiae conditio.* We are advised here not so much in the Duty of the Servants, as in the Condition of the Field.

Yer neither 2. doth Christ intend the least prohibition to the Magistrates Execution of Justice in punishing Malefactors.

The Sword of Justice is not to be born in vain, Magistrates are to be a Terrour to Evil Doers; in their rooting out them there can be no danger, but altogether safety to the Wheat; if they should be let alone, so as to proceed in impunity till the Harvest, the World would be but *Magnum Latrocinium*, or a *Circean Stable*; it would be an unclean Stage, where only Vice and Villany would act its part; it would be like to that Field under the Curse of Job 31. 40. Thistles would grow instead of Wheat; and Cockle instead of Barley; or like Solomons Field of the Sluggard, nothing would appear in it to denominate it a Field of Corn; but 'twould be all over-grown with Briars and Thorns.

'Tis observable, Christ doth not say, *Regnum bujus Mundi*, the Kingdom of this World, but *Regnum*

Regnum Caeli, the Kingdom of Heaven; which is universally interpreted of the Church, and tho' in our Saviour's Exposition of it, 'tis styl'd the World, yet that is in respect to its Catholicism and Universality, as dispers'd over the whole World; according to the Prophecies of it, it extends from Sea to Sea, and Christ sent his Disciples to all Nations; and the Apostle tells us, That their sound is gone into all the World; 'tis properly his Kingdom redeem'd by his Blood, sanctified and enlighten'd by his Spirit, and will at last be presented to himself without spot and blemish.

That this Parable is meant not of a Civil and Political, but of an Ecclesiastical Body, is generally agreed; but then still the Question returns, Whether our Saviour enters his *Noli Pro* — against Ecclesiastical Censures?

To this 'tis answer'd 3. Negatively, That Christ here intends no Prohibition to Church Censures for the punishing of Offenders.

St. Austin puts and determines this Case thus, *Ipse Dominus cum servis volentibus rem colligere dicit, finite utraq; crescere usq; ad messem, prænisiit causam dicens, ne forte cum vultis colligere non eradicetis & triticum; ubi satis ostendit tum metus iste non subest, non dormiat severitas discipline. Our Lord to the Servants appearing in readiness to gather*

ther the tares, requiring their growth together till the Harvest; he intimates the Cause, *Lest with them ye root up also the Wheat*: in evidence that when no danger of that, then the severity of Discipline is to take place. Of which at large in his Epistle *contra Parmen. & contra Vincent.*

Christ himself decreed that he that would not hear the Church, should be as an *Heathen or Publican*, and the Apostles by unquestionable Authority gave Sentence of Excommunication upon the Incestuous Corinthian; *1 Cor. 5. 4.* and upon *Hymenus* and *Alexander*; *1 Tim. 1. 20.*

The Church is not to be supposed an undisciplin'd Rout, divested of power necessary to its consistence; which it would be, if it were here or elsewhere, under prohibition of exercising its *Censures*.

What then do's our Saviour mean in his thus expressing himself in this case to the servants? To which positively,

First in general, He expects patience, lenity, and tender caution, in eradicating those tares, he corrects the intemperate zeal of his Disciples, in whom he foresaw a disposition with improper and undue severities to prosecute offenders; of which they gave an early instance, in demanding fire from heaven to consume the *Samaritans*.

The mind of *Christ* in this will be more particularly

larly understood by considering his Sentence

First, With respect to the Question, as put by the Servants, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* And

Secondly, With respect to his Reason, Why not? *Lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up the Wheat also.*

Now in their Enquiry, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* They signifie their intent of a sudden and immediate dispatch of them without the exercise of due *Patience*, and necessary *Consideration*; thus,

Christ. in *Matth.* interprets the Servants intending to prosecute *Hereticks* with Fire and Sword, and saith, That if by his Negative they had not been obliged to alter their Resolutions, Bloodshed and War must have followed all over the World.

The Word in the Original for *gathering up*, is *sunthene*, and signifies not so much a single Collection, as a Gathering them up in Bundles; they would at once have swept away these *Tares* by some *devouring Judgment*, like that of Fire from Heaven; to this their Proposition Christ enters his dissent, and tho he well enough approv'd of the thing, yet by no means consented with them in the time and manner they would effect it, but

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gives check to that devouring Zeal that would destroy all Opposers; and doth intend first, that this gathering together, or rooting up, be rather *gladio oris* then *ore gladii*; that no other Sword, then the Sword of the Spirit be used; that by Admonition by the Sword of the Spirit of Meekness they be rather restor'd; Christ determines against their immediate and utter destruction in that way they design'd, *lest in gathering them up, they root up the Wheat.*

The Sword tho never so well edg'd, is an ill distinguisher between *Wheat* and *Tares*, and War the most improper Judge to determine Religious Controversies: 'Tis *gladius delpbicus*, and strikes on both sides without difference to Men on their Doctrines; it involves the Innocent and the Guilty in the same Calamity; like those dreadful Thunderbolts, *Minutius Felix* tells of, *Sine delectu tangunt sacra & profana, hominis & uxoris ferunt & religiosos*; they without distinction strike places sacred and profane and persons innocent and nocent; but is never more fatally devouring, than when in the hands of those in whom *Glosselius* one of the Anti-remonstrants in *Rotterdam* plac'd it, who defin'd, That if the Prince or Clergy neglected the Reformation of a Church, *Necesse est id facere plebeios licet ad sanguinem usq; pro ea pugnent*. That
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the *Plebeians* must Reform, tho it be with a Resistance unto Blood.

Theophylact makes the more Christian Comment upon the Text, who saith, God would not by War have the Tares pull'd up, lest in so doing the Righteous suffer with the Wicked.

Theophylact in *Lot*. saith, The Servants were so incens'd and inflam'd against these Tares upon their appearance in their Lords Field *καὶ οὕτως ἐκ τούτου*, to save the trouble of a dilatory Process, were resolv'd by a rash Execution to rid them from the troubles of this miserable and wretched Life.

This return of our Lord to the Servants, if it be not a strict Prohibition of Capital Punishments, it is a severe Caution, that due care be had in inflicting it, lest the Wheat also be root-ed up.

'Tis certain the Primitive Christians did interpret Christ, in saying, *He came to save mens lives, not to destroy them*; and here in my Text, as entering not barely a Caveat, but a Prohibition of punishing with death upon the score of Religion.

They reckon'd such a Process foreign to the Temper and contradictory to the Rules of Christianity.

It was once *St. Austin's* Opinion, *Neminem ad unitatem Christi cogendum esse*, That none were to

be compelled to become Christians: And when the insolence of the Donatists made it necessary for him to alter his mind, yet as *Bellarmin* confesses, *Semper exceptit supplicium mortis*; He always excepted punishment with death.

If it had been thought lawful to punish Heresie with death, the Apologies of *Tertullian* and the Primitive Christians, would have been in a great part insignificant.

'Tis a Modern Maxime in Christianity, but no where, that I can find, an Article of Faith, *Posse Hæreticos ab Ecclesia damnatos temporalibus penis & etiam morte multari*: That Hereticks condemned by the Church, were by the Civil Magistrate to be sentenced to Temporal Punishment, yea to Death it self.

It was *Calvin's* Opinion, *Hæreticos jure gladii coercendos*; That Hereticks were to be restrain'd by the Power of the Sword: Which *Beza* improves in his Tract, *De Hæreticis puniendis*, where he lays down this Thesis, *Hæreticos interdum capitali supplicio a Magistratibus coercendos*: That Hereticks are to suffer Capital Punishment.

This Question was better determin'd in the more early and purer Times of Christianity, as by *Lactantius lib. 5. cap. 10. Defendendam esse religionem non occidendo sed moriendo*. Religion is to be

be defended rather by the exposing our own, than violating the lives of others.

Our Saviour here forbids their thus being gathered up, lest the Wheat be rooted up also; it being evident if the servants had gone in that Method, they had wrong'd the Harvest; for as St. Austine saith, *Multi primo zizania sunt & postea triticum fiunt; fieri potest ut qui noxio dogmate depravatus est cras resipiscat & defendere potest veritatem*: as St. Austin, once a Manichee, afterwards *Malleus Hereticorum*. Many at first appear tares, which afterwards become wheat; he that is depraved with Error now, may repent too morrow.

Upon this saith St. Jerome, *Monemur non cito amputare fratrem*, not rashly to cut off a Brother, for they that are bad now, may be better hereafter; *Nisi Deus expectaret impium, non haberet unde glorificaret pium*; Had not God patiently expected the Repentance and Conversion of such whom Men would destroy, *ad laudabilem mutationem non pervenissent*, they had never attained to Saving Repentance.

Had Fire at the instance of the Disciples consumed the *Samaritans*, they had been prevented in their after-receiving the Gospel; had not Gods Patience given respite to the *Tares* after their first discovery,

discovery, *nec Mattheum de Publicano Evangelistam, nec Magdalenam de Meretrice penitentem habuisset; si Deus eradicasset Paulum persequentem, non haberet Ecclesia Paulum predicantem; Matthew of a Publican had never been an Evangelist, nor Magdalen the Harlot become Magdalen the Penitent; if Saul had been rooted out when he was a Persecutor, the Church would ever have wanted Paul the Apostle. The meaning of Christ in the Text then is, That they might have space for Repentance.*

St. Chrysost. affirms, That a Heretick, tho he persists with obstinacy in his Heresie, yet is not to be Punish'd with Death, with whom *Euthimius* consents. Christ, saith he, in this Parable would not suffer the plucking up the Tares, lest the Wheat should be rooted up with them; forbidding the execution of *Hereticks*, lest the *Orthodox* suffer with them.

It was therefore an unchristian heat in *Calvin*, that sent *Servetus* to the Flames, and in the *Switzers*, that commanded the Execution of *Valentine Gentilis* at *Bazil*; and in *Maximilian* the Emperour in causing the *Priscillianists* to be put to death; tho *Sulpitius Severus* saith of them, That they were *homines luce indignissimi*; yet he adds they were *pessimo exemplo necati*; tho they were the

the worst of Men, yet their Execution was of dangerous Consequence. And when *Alexius* of *Constantinople* caused the *Bongomili* to be put to Death, who (if their Opinions were candidly represented) were sufficiently bad, yet the *Eastern Bishops*, disallow'd of the Fact; and *Baronius* tells us, it was the ancient usage of the *Primitive Bishops* in moving the *Secular Power* against *Hereticks*, so to manage it, *Ut tamen a capitali supplicio inferendo dehortati sunt.*

'Tis evident that Capital Punishment had its first rise from the *Heathen* and *Arrian Emperours*, and in that it was after return'd by the Christians upon their Enemies; it was because the Man was too hard for the Christian.

Thirdly, Tho it is more generally interpreted, that the Servants resolv'd by the above-mentioned Severity, to cut them off from the body of *Mankind*, yet others, that they intended only to cut them from the Body of the Church; and *Loyd* and *Gorton* are of Opinion, That the Servants design to gather them up, was in such a way as was proper to the Church, *Separando eos a Communione Ecclesie*, by separating them from Church Communion.

Christ may probably here intend a caution and lenity in that direful and solemn Sentence of *Excommunication*,

munication, which is an *Amputation* or a cutting off from the Body of Christ; 'tis in the Name and Power of Christ, a delivery over unto Satan for the destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In comport with the meaning of Christ here, it was an old Rule, *Non Excommunicandam multitudinem*, that a multitude were not to be Excommunicated.

There was to be no gathering up in Bundles in this Life: the Church did only *Legere*, select one out of many Offenders, *Ut pena ad paucos esset, metus ad omnes; tormenta paucorum exempla omnium*: That the Punishment of a few, might be caution to all.

Dr. Taylor in *Duct. Dubitant*, tells us, *The Judgment of the Church in this Censure is an effective terrible Declaration of the Judgment of God; and therefore must not be exterminating and final for things of little concernment.*

The Second Canon of the Council at Worms, doth Decree, *Ut Nullus sacerdotum, quanquam re-
cta fidei, homines, pro parvis & levibus causis sus-
pendat*: That no Priest, tho never so sound in the Faith, may suspend Men from Church Com-
munion for a light Cause.

Dr.

Dr. Taylor in his *Duct. Dubitant.* asserts, That no Man is to be separated from the Church, but he that separates himself from God; and tells us, That he who for a trifling cause cuts off a man from Church Communion, is like him in the Fable, who with an Axe beat out his Neighbours brains, that he might brush off a fly, which he espied on his Fore-head: or like an indiscreet and severe Nurse, that to clean the Childs head of the *Dandruff*, fleas off his Skin.

All endeavours ought first to be us'd, that he may be restor'd with the *Spirit of Meekness*, that by Admonition and Reproof, to which the Scriptures are profitable, he may be reclaim'd, and till it appears *vulnus immedicabile*, he is not with that severity to be cut off.

Fourthly, The meaning of Christ may probably be, That in the *Admonition in Religion*, such as are mention'd *Rom. 14.* in which the Kingdom of Heaven doth not consist, the obligation of Christians is to exercise Charity, mutual Condescension, and Forbearance one towards another.

The Apostle there directs to the alloy of all Animosity and Discord about such things, and provides that there be no Censuring or Grieving one another, and to this purpose he allows a Liberty to Men of either *Perswasion*, informing us,

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That Christ died for both, and that God receiv'd both:

The Controversie in these indifferent things, lies not between *Wheat* and *Tares*, but between *Wheat* and *Wheat*, and it may be is founded only because one grows in a more fertile Soyl, and on a more Florid Stalk, or is of a brighter Complexion than the other.

That the true *Corn* should thus go together by the Ears, we may be sure is assignable to the hand of an Enemy, and if our Lord permits the Concrecence of *Tares* and *Wheat*, much more that *Wheat* and *Wheat* grow together.

'Tis as natural and usual for Christians to differ in their Sentiments in matters of that kind, as 'tis for Men to be of divers Statures and Complexions, wherefore (the Apostle telling us; *That he who doubteth is damned if he eat*) by Penalties to require a consent in one Opinion in things so indifferent, would be as hard as for one to thrust out his Neighbours *Eye*, because not so strong and piercing as his own; and would be a barbarity exceeding that of *Procrustes* the Robber, who measured all men by his own bed, and would bring them to that dimension, either by a *Rack* or *Defalcation*, he only torturing the Bodies, while the other wounds the Consciences, and cruciates the Minds of Men.

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'Tis observable in this Parable, that the Servants entred their Complaint against such as appear'd *Tares*, and it was for the rooting up of them they offer'd their service, to which our Saviour answer'd as in my Text, *Nay*, &c.

If they had address'd to their Lord with their Censures of their Fellow Servants, and had signified an Inclination, because in every trifling punctilio they agreed not with the Complainants that therefore they would go and *gather them up* our Lord would have given them another kind of Answer.

If the *Pharisees* were inexcusable in their neglect of the *great things* of the *Law*, through their Zeal in the lesser things of it, Christians are much more Criminal in violating the *great Gospel Law* of *Charity* and *Meekness*, upon the score of such things as are not at all required by any *Divine Law*.

If it were *inimicus homo* that sow'd those *Tares* that endanger'd the *Wheat*, certainly it is *inimicissimus homo* that would gather up the *Wheat* instead of *Tares*.

'Tis here observable, that tho the *Tares* appeared to the eys of the Servants, yet our Saviour did not adventure the well-doing of his Field upon their hand, so as to allow their Eradication;

if he had given any intimation of the Field, being committed to such a Conduct, as without possibility of being injurious to the *Wheat*, the *Tares* might be gathered up, the force of the reason of his Prohibition, *Lest with them ye root up the Wheat*, would be enervated.

'Tis probable our Saviour design'd the prevention of this, when he respited them till the *Harvest*, well knowing that they may then appear to be Children of the Kingdom, which through the passion or inadvertency of his Servants, would as *Tares* have been bundled up for the fire.

Thirdly, In the Accommodation of all this to our use, though it may be indecent for me to insist too particularly on the Parallel between the State of the Field, and the Condition of the Church of Christ amongst us, so as to charge the growth of the *Tares* to the *Supineness* or any other default in the Servants, or to suggest, that those concern'd in gathering the *Tares*, have not with the Servants of the Household consulted their Lord, nor taken their measures from him: Yet I shall adventure to give you the Judgments of such as are of great Honour and Authority upon this Subject; and shall close my Discourse with a *Recommendation* of the Example of the Servants to our Imitation.

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The Authorities of such as have given *their Opinion in this Matter* :

The Lord Chancellor *Hide* his Speech to the Parliament 1660, is fill'd up with the *Expressions* of his *Sense* of this *Case* and *Directions* for its *Cure*.

The *Honourable* and *Pious* Lord Chief Justice *Hale*, lamenting that the Cause of *Love* and *Piety* was hindred by our present Constitutions, did declare, *That the only means to heal us, was a New Act of Uniformity, that should neither leave all at liberty, nor impose any thing but what was necessary* : And with the Assistance of the Lord Keeper *Bridgman* and *Bishop Wilkins*, drew up the Form of a Bill to be tendred to the *Parliament* to that purpose.

The Arch-bishop of *Armagh*, for the *healing* of *Distractions*, and for the return of a *Wished* for *Peace and Unity*, did contrive some prudent *Accommodation* necessary.

Bishop Taylor in his *Duct. Dubitant*, expresses himself abundantly in this *Case*, as thus, with respect to our Condition he gives it as a *Rule*, *That the Ecclesiastical Laws must be easie and charitable, and when they are not, they oblige not, and that Ecclesiastical Laws that are meerly such, can't be universal and perpetual.*

Bishop

Bishop Davenant in his Letter to Durus saith, *That which makes Schisms perpetual, ist he exercise of a Tyrannical Power, so as not to acknowledge any for Brethren, or admit any to Communion with them, who will not receive from them, in any difference of Opinion, a Law both of believing and speaking.*

'Tis the determination of a Learned Doctor of our Church, *That without Controversie, the main inlet of all the Distractiōs, Confusions, and Divisions, of the Christian World, is by adding other Conditions of Church Communion, than Christ hath done.*

Were it needful, I might fill a Volume with Quotations of this kind; but,

I shall only instance in these which next to that in my Text, ought to be the greatest Authority with us. /

King James the First of Pious Memory, as Casaubon in his Epistle to Cardinal Perron, informs us, *Thought that for Concord there is no nearer way than diligently to separate things necessary from the unnecessary, and to bestow all our Labour, that we may agree in what is necessary, and that in what is not so, there may be Christian Liberty allow'd.*

The Royal Martyr Charles the First of glorious Memory, in Consideration of the State of the Kingdom in 1641, speaks thus, *As for Differences among our selves for Matters in their own nature,*

nature, that are indifferent concerning Religion, We shall willingly Comply, with the Advice of our Parliament, that some Law may be made for the exemption of Tender Consciences from Punishment or Prosecution for such Ceremonies, which by the judgment of most men are held to be matters indifferent, and of some, to be absolutely unlawful.

The late King *Charles the Second* of blessed Memory, in his Declaration from *Breda* first, and in his Declaration for Indulgence to Tender Consciences afterwards, gave sufficient Evidence of his Concurrent Opinion with his Royal Progenitors.

Thus it can't but be acknowledg'd, That some of the Wisest and most Learned, and the greatest of Men in these Three last Reigns, were affected with a sense of a Disease that the Church and Nation have been labouring under, and it appears that his Majesties Royal Ancestors had it often in their Thoughts, and upon their Desires, that it might be heal'd.

And as for our present Gracious Sovereign, that now wears the Imperial Crown, and sways the Royal Sceptre, whom God preserve; it appears that what was in the Heart of *David* his Father, hath a long time been upon the Heart, and now is upon the Hand of our *Solomon* his Son, and

and his *Hand findeth to do it with all his Might*: He like a Tender and Prudent Physician, experiencing the inefficacy and inconvenience of those corroding and acrimonious Applications, that have been too long us'd, thinks it proper, instead of that Salt and Vinegar, which hath only increas'd and inflam'd our Wounds, to recommend the Lenitives of *Oyl* and *Balsam*; most probably hoping, that the warm Beams of an Indulging Sun will prevail to the laying of that viciousness of Temper, which the rough and tempestuous Wind had occasion'd.

Our *Healing Sovereign* observing the Body *Politick* and *Ecclesiastick*, like the Man in the Gospel that fell among Thieves, if not half dead, yet lying sorely wounded, like the Good *Samaritan*, is pouring in *Oyl* and *Wine*, and while he is so, let not any of us be like him that pass'd by on the other side, as all together unconcern'd, or like him that only vouchsaf'd to look, but offer'd nothing to relieve him in that distressed Case; but let us all to our Capacities help to the quenching those common Flames, and the allaying those *threatning heats* that have been so fatal to us, and contribute our utmost in this *most Christian Service*: some of us by Humility

and Obedience, others of us by Compassion and Condescension, and all of us by our Prayers and Tears.

Lastly, To this we must reckon our selves oblig'd, by considering the Example of the Servants in the Text, *In servis habemus tam quod laudemus quam quod imitemur*: We have in the Servants both what is commendable and imitable.

They cleared themselves from a treacherous betraying the Trust repos'd in them, of the Field, by reporting to their Master the unexpected accident of the growth of the *Tares*; they being inform'd that an Enemy had done it, offer'd their service to redress the Mischief; that if the Enemy entred the Field by their Sloth, he might be expell'd by their Zeal. St. *Austin* to that Inquiry, Who is that Man that is eaten up with Zeal to Gods House? Answers, *Qui omnia quæ videt per-versa satagit emendare*: That if he sees the foundation of it too narrow and strait, will endeavour the enlargement of its basis to its due extent.

If he perceives an inconvenience in the sense incompassing the Field, will consult such an Amendment of it as may neither keep out such as belong to Christs Fold, nor suffer the wild Beast of the Field, nor the wild Boar of the Wood, neither Turk nor Pagan, to enter in. And that our

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Zeal in this, may not be an *Ignis Fatuus* to precipitate us into unsafe and dangerous Methods, that it may not be a feavorish heat, that invades the Health, and threatens the Life of that Body that cherishes it, but that it may be a Coal kindled at Gods Altar, let us with the Servants in the Text, go to our Lord.

So, first, not to be too much influenc'd by our Passions. *Solomon* tells us; *Wrath is Cruel, Anger is outrageous, and nothing can stand before Envy*, Pro. 27: 4.

So as, secondly, Not to take our Measures from the Examples of others, to return to them in proportion to those undue severities which at any time have been received from them, the Rule of our Saviour, Is not to do to others as they do, but as we would have them do to ourselves.

Let us therefore receive our Directions from Christ, and acquiesce in them, referring all to our Masters Will, and then proceed according to his Dictates, whose Service consists altogether in the following of his own Rules; for in so doing we shall most promote our Masters Honour, and be most servicable to his Field the Church; and best provide, that when we shall be translated from our Stations in his Kingdom here, we may be made partakers of his Eternal Kingdom in Heaven;

Heaven ; and in the meantime, God in his infinite Mercy, so direct the Counsels and Influence the Hearts of Men , that the *Tares* which at the *Harvest* shall be gathered , may not in the meantime be able either to suppress the *Wheat* , or destroy the *Field* ; and that our Lord Jesus, who loved his *Church* , and gave himself for it , may Sanctify and Cleanse it, and at last present it to Himself a *Glorious Church* without spot or blemish. *To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Glory, and Praise, both now and for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.
